

Public Transportation Intern Program

Description

The Public Transportation Intern Program is designed to promote and develop careers in public transportation and commuter assistance. Its goal is to provide interns with hands on experience in as many aspects of public transportation or commuter assistance management and operations as possible through direct exposure to activities and methods of public transportation and commuter assistance agencies.

Agencies benefit from promoting careers in public transportation and commuter assistance and gain flexibility by involving interns on special projects and tasks. The agency must ensure that a manager orients and guides the intern through as many aspects of the agency as possible.

At the conclusion of the internship, the intern must provide a written report to DRPT documenting their internship experience. The report should document the following:

- Description of the agency and the services it provides
- Description of experience gained in regards to the agency functions (planning, operations, maintenance, etc.)
- Description of the work performed by the intern for each function or agency department
- Results achieved by the intern for each function
- Lessons learned/observations for each function
- Recommendations on how to improve the internship experience

This program usually funds post-collegiate internships but may also be used for pre-graduate training. It supports increased awareness of public transportation as a career choice for aspiring managers, maintenance and operations staff, marketing employees and other specialization with public transportation and rideshare agencies. This program is not to be used for supplanting staff. Applicants are responsible for conducting an open recruitment process and selecting a qualified individual.

Eligible Recipients

Eligible grant recipients include the following public transportation agencies, including transit properties and TDM/Ridesharing organizations:

- Local and State Government
- Transportation District Commissions
- Public Service Corporations
- Planning District Commissions
- TDM/Commuter Assistance Agencies
- Human Service Agencies Involved in Rural Public Transportation

Eligible Expenses

Eligible expenses include the wages, fringe benefits, training, and travel for the intern. It is anticipated that grant funds will not support more than half of these costs.

Match Ratio and Limits of Funding

Intern applications are typically funded at the maximum state ratio of 95 percent. Intern salaries are based upon a set hourly rate (using state wage rates) times the number of hours the grantee expects the intern to work within one year. The funding for this program comes from the Special Projects fund, which includes funding for DRPT's Demonstration Assistance, Technical Assistance, TDM Operating Assistance, Transportation Management Project Assistance and Intern Programs. The amount of funding spent from the Special Projects fund for each one of these programs varies each year depending upon needs; however the total amount of funding for Special Projects is consistently in the range of \$2 million.

Application Evaluation Process

Applicants are not permitted to submit an intern application if they already have an existing Intern grant. Public Transportation Intern applications will be evaluated by DRPT using the following criteria:

- Project Scope – describe the intern program
- Project Readiness – describe project readiness and how the intern program will be completed within the program year
- Technical Capacity – identification of an intern coordinator that will be responsible for supervising the intern
- Project Budget – ability to execute the project scope within the proposed project budget
- Project Schedule – ability to execute the project scope within the project schedule, and a schedule on the areas of your program that the intern will work.
- Monitor and Evaluation Plan – approach to measuring performance and evaluating the results of the project

Upon completion of the evaluation process, DRPT includes the recommended applications and allocation in the Draft Six Year Improvement Program. The CTB approves the release of the draft program to the public for comment and following receipt of public comments, the CTB approves the final Six Year Improvement Program.

Application Procedure

Applications for all State Aid Grant Programs are made online on DRPT's On-Line Grant Application system (OLGA) at: <https://olga.drpt.virginia.gov>.

Required data includes:

- Contact information (including Intern Coordinator)
- Intern Work Program
- Project budget
- Project schedule
- Monitoring and evaluation plan

The application process for the Public Transportation Intern Program is summarized in the State Aid Grant Program Calendar in Section 3.

In order to ensure that local matching funds will be available for all applications recommended by DRPT for funding, a certification from the Chief Executive Officer of the entity applying for funding must be submitted to DRPT in May prior to the development of the Final Six Year Improvement Program. DRPT will provide future guidance on the form of the certification.